

It was the spring of 1833. The covered wagon of Adam Brown creaked to a stop at the intersection of the Old Sauk Indian Trail and the Military road. This seemed a good place - so in a grove of trees at this crossroads, He and his family ended their westward journey.

He and his wife and their small son, Christopher, had started out several weeks before from Elkhart, Ind. Here three years before Adam and Phoebe Myers were married. He had been born in North Carolina and she in Tennessee and both had grown up in Preble Country, Ohio.

Western fever was a common ailment that hit both young and old in those days and Brown had fallen victim to it as had his father before him.

The northern counties of Illinois in 1833 were beckoning settlers for since the settlement of the Blackhawk War the year before the Indians were no longer considered a threat. The crossroads just six miles west of the Indiana border proved irresistible to Brown for he remained there the rest of his life. There he farmed and ran a country inn until he died on March 8, 1895.

Neighbors were few for a few years but then many pioneers from farther east, Ireland, Scotland and Germany arrived to settle along Sauk Trail and the Military road. The crossroads began to be known as Brown's Corners - a name that still clings to the intersection.

In 1838, Adam Brown was the first purchaser of land in the south suburban area then known as Thornton precinct - under the federal pre-emption act of that year. On September 8, 1838, he filed claim for 160 acres in Section 32, buying it from the government for \$1.25 an acre. On November 29 of the same year he purchased 160 acres in Section 31 and 80 acres in Section 29 and on the following day he purchased 80 acres in Section 33. The price was still \$1.25 an acre. He then owned 480 acres of land in what is now Bloom township at the cost of \$600.

At first his hotel or inn according to a pioneer who stopped there in 1840 on his way from Chicago to Momence was nothing but an old Pennsylvania wagon box. However he did add that later a log cabin replaced the wagon box and eventually a frame building was erected.

Pioneers en route west were allowed to stop and camp in Bown's woods. At first pioneers were bound for other sections of northern Illinois - then for I-O-wa - accent on the "o" - and later for the gold fields of California and other western states.

Eastward traffic during the decade before the Civil War was apt to be at night. Many a night Adam Brown heard the McCoy farm wagon as it traveled eastward along Sauk Trail. He knew that in the bottom of the wagon under some hay were hidden one or more runaway slaves from Missouri being passed from the McCoy farm to the next "station" on the underground railroad - across the border in Indiana with the hope that the slaves would be able to reach Canada and freedom.

The settlement of Thorn Grove to the north of the crossroads became the village of Bloom in 1850. There were two stores in the village and the military road now was known as Chicago road.

The mail coach made regular trips to Danville from Chicago on Chicago road. - until the railroads began to carry the mail. In 1869 Adam Brown sold some of his land to the Chicago and Danville railroad which nearly paralleled Chicago road for many miles. Soon from the veranda of his inn, Adam Brown could watch the wood burning engines chugging along just east of his inn.

Two of Adam Brown's sons answered Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers. Adam and Phoebe had nine children, four boys and five girls.

In 1892 at the age of 82, Phoebe Brown died. She had shared with her husband for 59 years "the trials and hardships of pioneer life as well as the joys and comparative ease of an advanced civilization " her obituary said.

Three years later lacking but 10 days of his 90th birthday, Adam Brown died at his home, having lived there 62 years. Surviving were eight of his nine children, 17 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

"A sturdy pioneer" read his obituary " he labored hard to subdue the raw prairie and was one of the many to cause the wilderness blossom as the rose and endured the trials and vicissitudes of settling a new country.

"A true patriot, he always stood for liberty, right and justice for all; our free institutions and the best interests of the nation were by him held sacred."

In 1906 the old Brown's Corners hotel was sold to Gustave Burgel and the family continued to operate the business - first as a hotel and then as a tavern until the property was sold to the Sinclair company as a site for a service station.

Thus - even though all physical traces of Adam Brown and his family have vanished, Brown's Corners continues to serve the traveling public.